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A traditional circle of non-responsibility

by Will Nicholls

They say the fire near Eastmain started on June 12 but no one did anything about it for over two weeks. Even as I write this editorial the fire is still burning and it's July 17. The fire is (or was) so big that if it happened eastward the province of Prince Edward Island (PEI) would be no more. PEI isn't even as big as the 6500 sq km that went up in smoke as of June 27 in Eeyou Istchee.

The fire came as close as 4 km to Eastmain before anything was done besides evacuating pregnant women, Elders, children and those with health problems. Eleonore Mine was also evacuated as flames and smoke came ever closer. Still there was no response to the out-of-control fire. Even the candidates running for Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief weren't really making this an election issue and it should have been. Crees are stewards of the land after all and a cry for action should have been on everyone's lips.

Yet one cannot really blame them. It was and still is difficult to know who was responsible. SOPFEU doesn't have any responsibility past the 51st parallel for fires. It seems that Quebec feels since there is no commercial value north of that let the fires burn as they may. It was pointed out that the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND) had some responsibility. Turns out they only call in the troops when a community is in danger. They pass the buck saying Ressources naturelles du Québec is responsible and SOPFEU is relegated to just monitoring the fires north of the 51st.

And thus the circle on non-responsibility is complete. Yet some concerns have to be raised and rightly so.

Even though there was an election, why was the Grand Council so silent about this problem? This should have seen major media coverage but when the victim is silent so is the news coverage. We all saw concern over the fires near Labrador but next to nothing on what was most likely the biggest fire in Quebec. It was only when the smoke from the fire affected air quality in Montreal did we see a small reference to the fire.

Back in the late 1980s Hydro-Québec (HQ) referred to Eeyou Istchee as a wasteland. It seems that Quebec and Canada is willing to see it become one because of money. The worth of the Eeyou Istchee is nothing according to the bean counters and so we pay the price.

Given that such a large percentage of Eastern United States power and the money made from sales to them I would not think the land is worthless. Between 2008 and 2012, HQ paid C\$8.9 billion in dividends to the Quebec government. A portion of that revenue came from US sales that reached a little less than \$1 billion as near as I can figure it out. Just look at Vermont where exports from HQ account for 28% of all power used in that state.

It is not only the loss of cabins, property, dead animals and such that concerns the Cree. It is the relationship and support we expect as Quebecers and Canadians. Les Québécois talk about how they were mistreated by the English and use that as reason for separation. Perhaps the Cree should consider this option. Nunavut exists and the 1898 and 1912 Boundaries and Extension acts are not as far back in the past. If we cannot count on Quebec to protect our way of life then we should step up to the plate and cry, "Vive Eeyou Istchee libre!"

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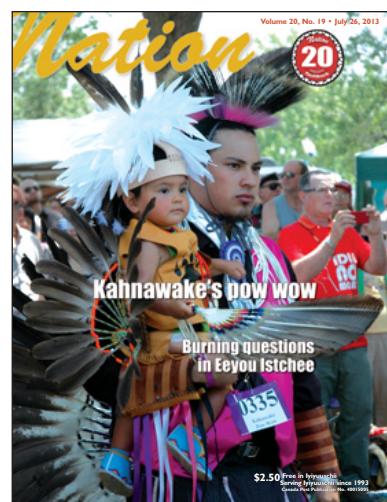


photo by:
Amy German

Bumping along the highway

by Joshua Iserhoff



Follow the Yellow Brick Road and you'll end up in the land of milk and honey! If only that Yellow Brick Road was paved gold with no huge cracks that have been scotch-taped, deep potholes and treacherous 18-wheelers whizzing by you like bazooka-propelled rockets. I am talking about the infamous James Bay Highway. Oh boy, no mercy on the shocks – yes, I know what that's like!

Time and time again, our dear costal travelers have to endure endless car repairs on their Cadillac suburbs. A Bugatti would not last up here! Something's gotta be done soon.

What solution can I bring to the table: pull our funding resources together, negotiate with whoever owns the JBH, have Crees maintain it and add a tollbooth. Member cards would be available to the Cree. Hey, it works for the Americans. Why can't we be copycats*? (*This should not apply to fashion, thank you.)

I have a love-hate relationship with JBH's sister, the dusty, rocky Route du Nord. I love the scenery and for some odd reason I feel spiritually lifted whenever I'm on it, which is all the time as my job allows me to visit all the neighbouring townships. (I'm best at cameos, no questions please only pictures!)

Anyhow, if only someone out in the Cree world could invent a large vacuum machine to suck up all those big rocks that tan all day and smash our windshields when a company truck zooms by at 120 km even though it's a 70 km zone. KM

130 is the worst and the rocks get bigger and bigger. I practically have to stop and move the rocks myself, that's if I'm not wearing my suit and tie and listening to Chisasibi Rockers.

As I write this column, it's Election Day in Eeyou Istchee and by the time this issue is published I am sure that a run-off will be at hand. Whoever gets elected has to discuss these infamous twisted sister roads, and what to do with the JBH and RDN. Get the same cement that OJ has. I heard it wasn't all that expensive. Talk to OJ extraordinaire Abel Bosum. He knows everything, including all the files at Grand Council. I work with the guy and I'm a fan.

Seriously, I dislike hearing stories of single mothers out in Cree land with their cars breaking down because of these badly maintained roads. If we have to start paying taxes and getting our municipalities, access roads and twisted sister roads should be paved. I'd be more than happy to see my dollar used to enter the land of milk and honey, instead of dreading it.

If I were given the ruby red shoes, I would click them and pave our roads, beautify our stop signs with rubies, carpet the rez with grass and make them presentable. After all, in the Land of Oz everyone is happy when everything's maintained and nice.

Speaking of the Wizard, rest in peace Isaac Kawapit a.k.a. the White Wizard of Nishiyuu. You will be missed. Let's continue to fight for our Yellow Brick Road, for our children's Cadillacs depend on it!

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Canada

Historical digs

Urban archaeology on Mount Royal unearths relics from the past

by Akiva Levitas

On a hot summer day there is nothing better than going to the park with family and friends to enjoy the atmosphere. In Montreal, the newly restored Beaver Lake on Mount Royal has been drawing thousands of visitors, but standing out among the throngs of sunbathers and picnickers are picketed-off areas with an archeological team digging strategically placed holes.

Clad in their orange vests and armed with a variety of tools, the Ethnoscope Inc team led by Christian Gates St-Pierre, an expert in Quebec prehistoric dig sites, has been working since the beginning of July carefully extracting artifacts from various locations on and around Mount Royal. "We do archaeology to salvage sites that may be destroyed by construction," St-Pierre said explaining the role of Ethnoscope.

This time however it was the city of Montreal that hired his team in order to survey the area around the Smith House in Mount Royal Park. "It's the most likely area where we can find historical artifacts," said St-Pierre.

According to historical records, the area surrounding the Smith House was once a farm in the late 1800s. "Around here we've discovered a few artifacts from the 19 century," St-Pierre said, "such as nails used in constructing the barn houses and other buildings which surrounded the Smith House."

Some of the finds go even further back with the discovery of prehistoric quarry sites in the vicinity of the mountain. "During the spring we were digging for a couple of weeks on the other side closer to Outremont," St-Pierre said. "We discovered a prehistoric quarry where we found evidence that Native Americans extracted feldspar which was used to make stone tools."

During previous excavations in and around the park, prehistoric burial sites were discovered. According to logs of French explorer Jacques Cartier, there were two Iroquoian villages at the base of Mount Royal.

The surveying of the area was aided by the use of the Smith House as a reference point in conjunction with maps of the area dating from the 19 century. The digs are conducted with surgical precision with the soil from clean-cut square sections being extracted and sifted through before being returned back into the ground with little to no evidence that a dig was even conducted in the area.

Many of the finds retrieved at the site tell stories of the people who once lived in the area. A bone dice, a marble, bits of a pipe, a porcelain doll head, half a doorknob, and some broken ceramic were unearthed on that sunny day of the dig. These relics bring to life the daily existence of people from a time long gone.

The dig at the Mount Royal site will be ongoing until the end of July and with a wealth of history buried beneath the foothill



Porcelain doll head from the late 19th century



Team member digging near the Smith House

of Mount Royal there will be plenty more unearthed in the coming weeks. In the midst of all the summertime revelers and the scorching heat, St-Pierre's team of diggers continue to unearth relics from the past in order to shed light on our city's history.

For those interested in learning more about dig sites and archaeological finds in Montreal and Quebec, August will be the ninth Archaeology Month in the province. This edition, organized by the Archéo-Québec network with the theme of "Archaeology up close", will bring the public closer to our cultural past with hands-on events, such as simulated digs and site visits which are aimed at bringing history to life.

For information on events in your area, check out www.archeoquebec.com.

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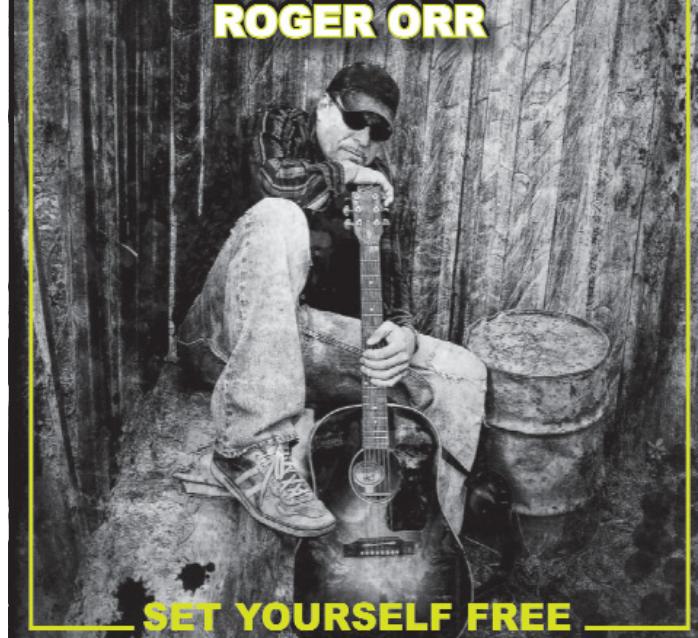


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Demanding an a-pole-ogy

Teddy Otter says Eeyou Communications Network is giving him a line

by Jesse Staniforth

Talking about dealing with the poles on his trapline, Waswanipi's Teddy Otter recalls George Orwell's book *Animal Farm*.

"They taught us that in school," he said, about the story of animals that organize and fight to take control of their own destiny from their human masters, only to see some in their ranks win power and decide that "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

"That's what it's like dealing with the Grand Council," he said with a laugh.

The problem, Otter explains, is that the Eeyou Communications Network (a non-profit corporation) has installed poles on both sides of creeks and other water on his trapline in order to run fibre-optic cables over the water.

Isaac Voyageur, Director of the Cree Regional Authority's Environment and Remedial Works Department, says this is a necessary step to installing cable.

"For fibre-optic cable," he said, "most of the time it's buried in the road, due to the fact that it's electricity infrastructure. But when it crosses a creek, there have to be posts put up on both sides of the creek. That way it doesn't go too close to the culvert because, if the frost heaves up, it could break. For that reason, they have to string it across small creeks or water."

Because the lines generally run north, while waterways run west to James Bay, Voyageur says that most cables cross in one place and require only two or three poles per waterway.

"They don't go along the rivers," he said. "They cross perpendicularly, at a 90-degree angle."

Otter, however, didn't like the poles from the start, and says it took him a long time even to get an explanation of what they were doing with them.

"About four years ago they started clearing some of the land on the side of the road, and they dragged in these

greasy poles," he said. "They were putting these poles on both sides of all my creeks and culverts on the trapline. We didn't know what was going on. It took me about four years to find out who was doing it."

Otter says that the Band Council and Cree Trappers' Association were not helpful in informing him about the installation of the poles, and to make matters worse, he says, they were installed sloppily.

Otter remembers the meeting differently.

"I tried to explain [the problem], but they didn't want to hear any more. They just left. Alfred said we should hang something on the cables, some weight or some ribbons. I said, 'That'd just make it worse!'"

Voyageur says he's confused to hear of Otter's frustration.

"When we left him, he seemed to be happy that we had resolved his issue, and

"THEY STARTED CLEARING SOME OF THE LAND ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD... THEY WERE PUTTING THESE POLES ON BOTH SIDES OF ALL MY CREEKS AND CULVERTS ON THE TRAPLINE. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. IT TOOK ME ABOUT FOUR YEARS TO FIND OUT WHO WAS DOING IT."

But above all, he's angry about the danger to birds presented by the lines.

"Every waterway," he explained, "has fog in the morning and fog in the evening. Birds know that where there's fog there's water, so they fly toward the fog. They can't see the cables. It's no good – I haven't had any geese or ducks in the past two years. They avoid the poles – they're scared of that line. They don't come near my trapline like they used to."

Voyageur says that when he and Alfred Loon from ECN and the Grand Council met with Otter on June 28, "[Otter's] concern was that a bird or a goose could run into [the cable]. So we suggested that we could make them more visible: for example, we could put something reflective on the wire, so that if a bird passes by and sees that, he can avoid that. [Otter] agreed to that measure to be put in place. His concern at the time was that he was afraid birds would run into the wires. It seems like it's a different scenario that he's giving [of birds avoiding his trapline entirely]."

addressed the concerns that he had," Voyageur said. "He understood that it wasn't 100% guaranteed that birds wouldn't actually run into the wires, even if we put these visible markers on them. We weren't prepared to give him that guarantee."

The poles and cable, Voyageur underlines, are necessary for the proper functioning of modern life in Eeyou Istchee.

"You have to be mindful that this fibre-optic cable is one of tens of cables – telephone lines, hydroelectric cables, wires – that service the entire north," he said. "A very small fraction is represented by this cable we're talking about. We explained the importance of that cable. It's connecting all the emergency services together – the ambulance service, the police service, the Cree Health Board. He understood that, I would think."

But Otter doesn't agree, and he doesn't like the way the whole business has been conducted.

"All I want is to get these poles out of there. That's the first and the only thing I told them to do."



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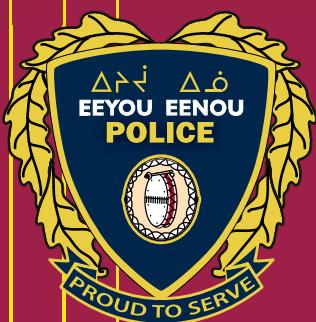


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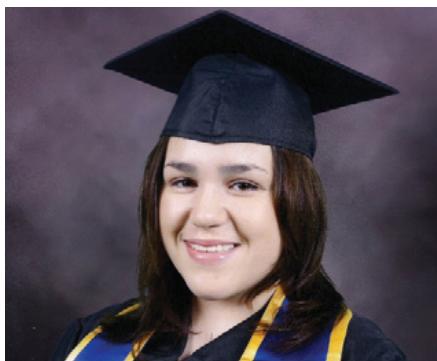
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Mistissini student wins Cree-Naskapi Commission Award

Carrie-Lynn MacLeod, 17, is the latest winner of the 16th annual Cree-Naskapi Commission Award, which highlights highest academic achievement. MacLeod was first nominated for the award by her high school, Voyageur Memorial, located in Mistissini, where she was also valedictorian and prom queen.

"I just graduated from Grade 11, I feel proud of myself." MacLeod told *the Nation*.

This will be MacLeod's second time winning the award since 2010.

"The award is given by the schools in each community in recognition of an individual student with the highest academic achievement," said Brian Shawana, Director General of the Cree-Naskapi Commission.

The award is designed to encourage continued academic excellence among students.

Each school selects a candidate, after which the Cree-Naskapi Commission prepares an official plaque, which is presented to the student by an Elder in their community.

In the end, MacLeod ended up taking home a total of five prizes, including the Cree School Board Award.

First turn of elections inconclusive

The first turn of the 2013 Grand Council elections ended without the naming a Grand Chief or Deputy Grand Chief. No candidate was able to secure the required absolute majority (50% + 1) needed to secure a victory. Results from the run-off election pitting Matthew Coon Come against Ashley Iserhoff for Grand Chief and Rodney Mark against Linda Lillian Shecapio for Deputy Grand Chief were not known at press time.

The following are election results from the first turn:

GRAND CHIEF

Jack Blacksmith	901	16.91%
Matthew Coon Come	2629	49.33%
Ashley Iserhoff	1799	33.76%

DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

Robert Kitchen	613	11.50 %
Kenny Loon	720	13.51 %
Rodney Mark	1071	20.09 %
Christopher Napash	646	12.12 %
Roger Sandy	418	7.84 %

Linda Lillian Shecapio	915	17.16 %
Virginia Wabano	446	8.37 %
Bertie Wapabee	502	9.42 %

Broken cable causes election delay

Results from the first turn of the 2013 Grand Council Elections were delayed for more than 12 hours by a failure in fiberoptic communications cable north of Matagami on July 15. The failure affected all communications system in the area, including cellphone reception, internet and landline connections.

In an email to Chief Election Officer Lawrence Jimiken, Director of Economic & Sustainable Development for the Cree Regional Authority Alfred Loon alleged that the cut wiring was caused by the Eeyou Communications Network's (ECN) contracting service, Electro Saga of Lac St-Jean. The accident is believed to have occurred when Electro Saga was deploying cable.

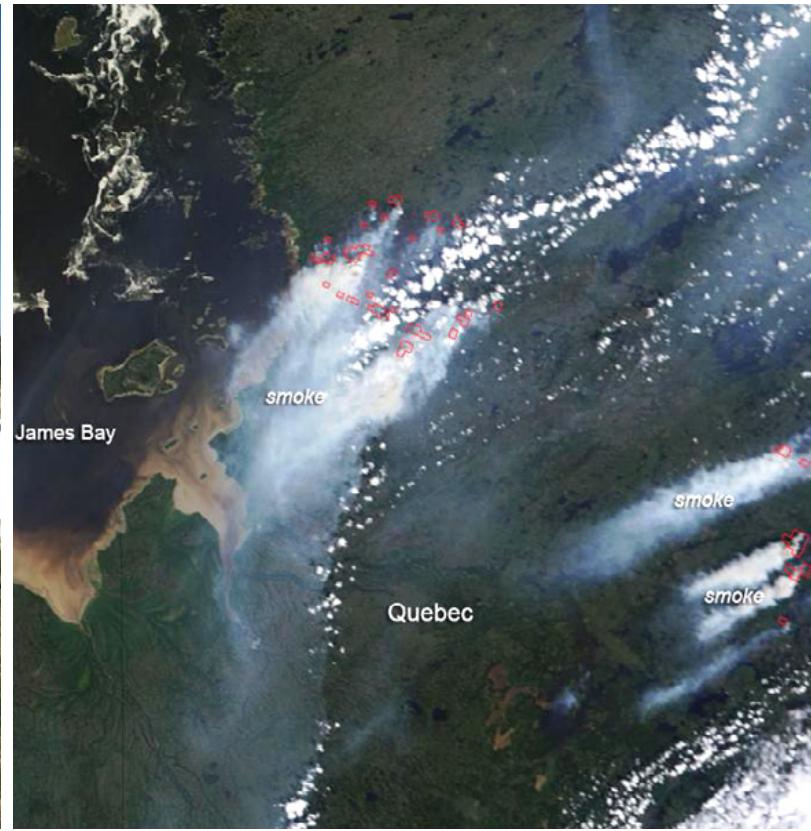
Service was restored in the early morning hours of July 16, but election tallies were not available online until the afternoon of the same day.

Despite conspiracy theories surrounding the oddly timed accident, it is not believed to have had any effect on election results.

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com



feature



We didn't stop the fire... Why the fires near Eastmain were left to burn

by Amy German

On June 12, after what has been the driest summer reported in northern Quebec in over 40 years, a fire began to burn in the bush near the community of Eastmain. But, unlike any other area below the 51st parallel, this fire was just left to burn, out of control until June 29 when a crew from the Ministère de la Sécurité publique was dispatched to start fighting the blaze.

The question remains as to why this blaze was allowed to burn for 17 whole days without any provincial or federal body stepping in to deal with it before it raged out of control.

According to Jacques Viger, the regional director for the Ministère de la Sécurité publique, forces from the south only arrived on the scene at the end of June because it was then that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND) made the call to start fighting the fire because it posed a threat to human lives.

It was at this point that AAND and Eastmain evacuated the community's most vulnerable individuals, approximately 250, to Val-d'Or. Fearing further carnage, the highway was closed down for several days leaving many stranded north and south of the afflicted area.

But that doesn't mean that the fire was entirely extinguished.

Once the immediate crisis had been averted, the highway was reopened and Crees started returning to their homes. Eastmain residents however quickly discovered that the fire was still blazing.

By July 10, the fire had already razed 650,000 hectares to the ground. It continues to burn because woods north of the 51st parallel are not considered to be commercially profitable.

"This is the way the law is: when you have forests that are not commercially profitable, we let the fires burn because it would be a waste of time, energy and financial resources to put them out," said Viger.

In regions south of the 51st parallel throughout the rest of the province, once a forest fire starts, the provincial government along with SOPFEU (la Société de protection des forêts contre le feu) fight it until it is out.

But, funding for this is provided by the province and the industries operating in the region such forestry and mining companies.

"Above the 51st parallel, if there is no forestry, mining or other activities in that area then we protect just the people and say goodbye to the rest."

"This is the way it is and there will need to be a change in the legislation to fix the situation. When you want to see change here, you need to put up the money behind it and in this day and age, it is money that drives our governments," said Viger.

But while AAND is technically the body in charge of this particular area above the 51st, according to their website, the only responsibility they really hold is to support Aboriginal communities through their emergency plans in the event of a forest fire.

After several attempts to get in touch with AAND about why the forest fires were allowed to burn for so long, AAND's media response team emailed the following to *the Nation*.

"Ressources naturelles Québec is responsible for the management of forest fires in Quebec, including in the province's northern regions. The Government of Quebec has provided SOPFEU with the mandate to survey and fight forest fires in the province. The decision to intervene was made based on monitoring performed by SOPFEU."

And since SOPFEU is only responsible for monitoring fires in the north and not actually putting them out, responsibility has once again been shifted from the feds and back on to the province.

It isn't difficult to figure out why this system exists. As Viger explained, the cost of fighting forest fires is astronomical when you consider the thousands of dollars a day it costs to get that kind of equipment up and running in the north and then you add on the hefty price tag for the workers and their expenses. These costs rise significantly when you are dealing with areas without roads.

But, these costs could be comparable as evacuating a community also comes with a hefty price tag. Planes alone cost about \$4000/ hour and it took several of them to evacuate Eastmain residents to Val-d'Or and then return them a week later. Then there is the cost of hotels and meals.

"In the intensive area (south of the 51st Parallel), we don't let these fires burn out of control in the first place and so it doesn't cost as much to deal with them right away. Occasionally a fire will

burn out of control, but then we will just work harder to get it under control," said Viger.

According to Eastmain Chief Edward Gilpin, the fires should have been fought from the point of ignition, prior to spreading but that is easier said than done.

"As I always say, there is this red tape that can only get cleared up by an emergency, one that involves human lives in the community.

"When the other kind of emergency strikes, like if we say that our forests and

ing national headlines, knocking out power in Montreal's metro system and at Six Flag's amusement park, La Ronde, on July 4 as well as for over half a million residential customers, Gilpin was actually in Montreal to witness the drama.

"This was very unnecessary, simply because nobody wanted to spend the money to put out the fire right away and then we wouldn't have encountered all of these expenses.

"Then again, there are people who have never seen James Bay making decisions at a government level," said Gilpin.

"THIS IS THE WAY THE LAW IS: WHEN YOU HAVE FORESTS THAT ARE NOT COMMERCIALLY PROFITABLE, WE LET THE FIRES BURN BECAUSE IT WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME, ENERGY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO PUT THEM OUT."

triplines are burning, then there's the confusion over who is responsible. Is it the Minister of Natural Resources? The responsibility for this is still very much in the air and it has never been settled as to who should handle this," said Gilpin.

Yet Gilpin was unfazed by the government's reaction as he knew it was coming. Looking back to his previous position as the president of the Cree Trappers' Association from 1984-2000, Gilpin said there had been a proposal from a pilot at Wemindji Air to keep the necessary equipment on the ready at their base in Radisson.

"This was a proposal made by the trappers, but the government and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs decided that they wouldn't put any money into this and the reasoning they gave is because they called it a 'wasteland.' This is because the muskegs and the trees didn't have any commercial value," said Gilpin.

By the time the fires began to have an impact on the rest of the province, mak-

At the same time, weeks later, the people of Eeyou Istchee are still trying to assess the damage done on their triplines, particularly when it comes to how hunting and trapping for food in the coming months.

At KM 409, Gilpin said he and his family lost the brand-new cabins they had just built for his in-laws, sister-in-law and another individual.

And the losses keep mounting for other Crees whose camps and other belongings were lost in the blaze.

Back in Eastmain however, it is the loss of wildlife that really has the community talking. Many of the local hunters and trappers have been exchanging stories about the carcasses they have seen of animals that simply didn't have the time to get away because the wind carried the fire over so quickly.

"The local guys here reported one of a porcupine hanging from a tree, completely cooked to it," said Gilpin.



photo by Bessie Tomatuk

Caught in the fire Johnny Neeposh talks about his Eastmain forest-fire experience

by Amy German

On hand to protect his family's cabins and camp, Mistissini's Johnny Neeposh contacted the Nation and spoke about being alone in the bush with the wildlife in this incredible tale of survival.

Here is his account from trapline M25, near Eastmain.

"I went to check on my cabin as we have a lot of cabins up there and I stayed for a little over a week to check up on the fire and these cabins and put out a fire here and there. We had a 'chalet-rond' given to us by SEBJ and we didn't want it to burn down.

"There was a time when the fire came close to our camp. The day before the fire got very close, I had already put out one fire. I was up there all alone. My brother George had given me a water pump and this is what I was using.

"I had got it out at around 9:30 in the evening and was very tired and so I rested. The very next morning I went back

to check to see if the fire had stayed out but I knew something was coming as the wind was picking up. When I got to where I had been the day before, a big fire was already raging.

"My son-in-law had arrived at around 2:00 am and I told him that we had to stop the fire by making a fire line. So we went to do this but the fire was travelling so fast with the wind that I told him that we should get the pump set up instead.

"We set the pump up by a little road going down to a lake where I had my boat ready in case the fire got to be too intense and I had to get away. But, by the time we got the pump set up, the fire was almost 100 feet from the house.

"I started to spray water and as I began to put the fire out, I knew it was going to be impossible to stop it. So I sent my son-in-law away in my car to the camp where his wife and kids were. I wanted him to get his family out to safety.

"When they finally left, I fought the fire for a while and it finally got to be across the road where I was. I was still spraying so I could give them the time they needed to go.

"Finally I pulled out and jumped into my canoe and went out into the bay. But the smoke was so thick that I could see only 15 feet ahead of me. The only thing I did was look at the spot where the sun was reflected and went around and around in the bay, trying to get some clearance out into the big lake.

"Finally I had the clearance I needed to get out from the smoke as I could see some land and so I went out into the big lake.

"When I got there, I remembered something my father had always told me, about what people used to do a long time ago when they were in the middle of a fire. This was something that I used to ask him about.

"He told me what they used to do and you know, at my age, these things tend to come back.

"The first thing he told me was to look for an island, not a big one but a small one. If there is a west wind, go on the south side of the island because the smoke will hit the trees and go up into the air. Behind the island there will be less smoke.

"He said that when you go behind the island, look for a thick moss, something you will see as a bump along the shore. When you get it, make some holes in the moss, big enough to fit your nose and mouth and when you do this make several holes in it along the shore because the moss will act like a filter for the smoke. When the smoke gets too thick, put your mouth and nose into the holes and breathe in there. That way you are not going to breathe in the smoke.

"So, I was thinking about this but I had a mask with me but still, I found an island and stayed on the south side of it. There was fire all around me on both sides. The lake I was on was not very big, about average size.

"While I was there I began to get thirsty and so I went to get some water from my boat. As I grabbed my bottle and turned around, all of a sudden I noticed a sandy point with a big rock and standing right beside it was a bear.

"He was looking right at me. I don't really know what came over me, I just said to myself, how about that!

"I had remembered a time where I had asked my father what he had wanted to be in the afterlife, to which he had always answered, a bear.

"I thought of this in my excitement. The bear looked at me; he wasn't very far away, maybe about 100 feet.

"The smoke and debris was coming in from the mainland, there were leaves blowing by with the fire as the wind was so strong. So, I went to get my life jacket and put it in the water to put over the gas tank on my boat in case something fell on the gas tank. I looked again but I did not see the bear.

"So, I said to myself, now what do I do.

"I took my axe with me just in case, so that it couldn't sneak up from behind.

It wasn't a big island and so I went around and then from standing in the middle, I could see the ends of both sides. I could see that the bear was gone.

"The most amazing thing was that there was fire on the north side so maybe he swam towards the fire or he swam to the next island over but I should have been able to see him swim over to it.

"But I didn't.

"So I waited. I was on the island for quite a while. Finally at around 8:00 pm, the winds died down and the smoke began to lift and so I went back to the land where I came from, on the sandy beach.

"When I got there I was so surprised because everything was gone, nothing survived. The skidoo, the cabins and absolutely everything else was gone.

"It happened very, very fast. We lost everything.

"A friend of mine from Nemaska came to look for me and when he arrived he was very happy that he had found me alive and well."

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And the drums played on

Kahnawake's pow wow a
great success despite
a congested Mercier Bridge

by Amy German





The 23rd annual Echoes of a Proud Nation Pow wow in Kahnawake went off without a hitch, bringing together individuals from around the world to celebrate life through dance, drums and Indian tacos.

According to the festival organizers, nearly 7000 people attended the event despite soaring temperatures and traffic congestion that was one of the hottest topics of conversation.

With the Mercier Bridge reduced to one lane of traffic in either direction, there were lengthy holdups getting into the pow wow that often had cars idling for periods of 45 minutes.

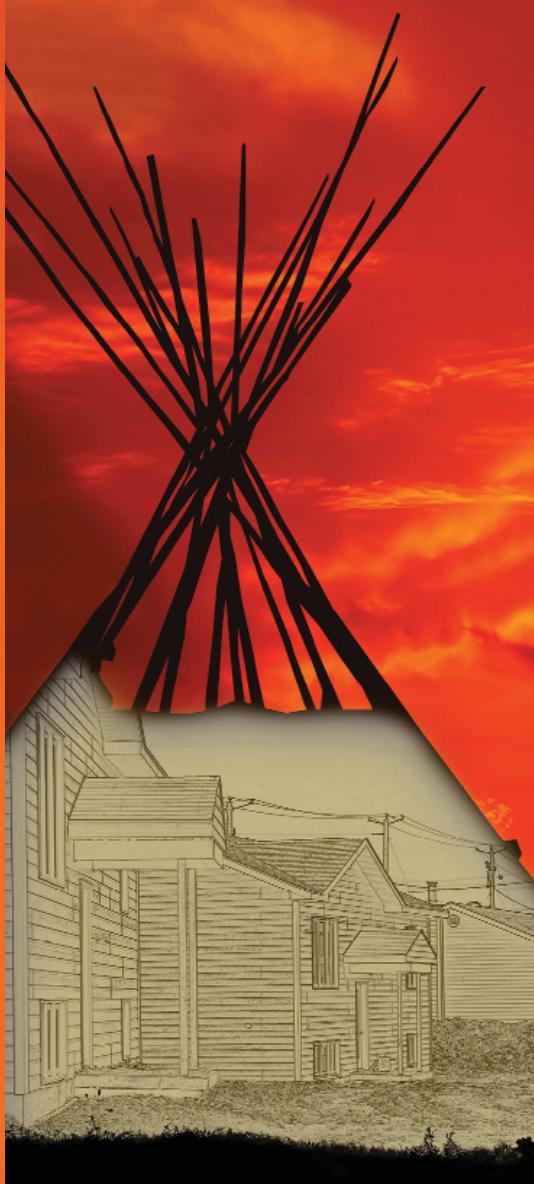
And yet throngs of patrons waited patiently in their vehicles, often to the dismay of howling toddlers (at least in my case), only to burst enthusiastically onto the scene and delve into every delight that is synonymous with one of the province's most popular pow wows.

While the dancing got off to a late start at 1:30 pm on Saturday on account of many dancers being stuck in traffic, pow wow goers used their time to peruse the many vendors and exhibitor booths on display at this largely merchant pow wow. The food vendors also saw a wild flurry of action prior to the main event as the dancers and spectators fueled up on their share of walleye nuggets, moose

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platters, Indian tacos, bison burgers, wild rice salads, gallons of lemonade and, of course, the traditional Mohawk strawberry juice.

Each day the pow wow opened at 9:00 am with activities carrying on late into the evening. This year there was a special feature prior to the main event – Chooky Dancers from Australia performing as mid-morning entertainment. The two dancers were there on a cultural exchange.



“They came because they had contacted the cultural centre here and wanted to do some kind of cultural exchange with the pow wow because they were already around,” said Lynn Norton, one of the Pow wow organizers.

According to Norton, attendees came from all over, including many foreign tourists visiting Montreal as well as Indigenous visitors who had come specifically for the pow wow, like the large contingency from Peru.

Among the dancers was a brother-sister duo that had driven for seven hours from Pikogan (near Amos) to share their culture, spirit and pride among the hundreds of other traditionally garbed, feathered and jingle-jangled lot that were queuing up for the Grand Entrance of the dance arena.

“We spent seven hours travelling to get to this pow wow but we came to this one despite the distance because it was one of the first pow wows that I got to know. I haven’t been dancing for that long but in the region I come from (Abitibi) there aren’t a lot of them,” said Melanie Kistabish.

As I spoke to Melanie, my toddler grasped at the long, spaghetti-like fringes of her costume and tried to put them into his mouth. Rather than fuss over a 19-month-old yanking at her precious and delicate skins, Melanie smiled affectionately at him as she was both confident in the craftsmanship of her incredible outfit and seemed to think it only natural that he would grab at them.

“My outfit is traditional and it is really all about the logo (medicine wheel design). It tells the story of my life. There is the sun and the four colours, one each for the four parts of my life as I am a designer, a teacher, a mother and much more,” she said.

Her brother, Malik Kistabish stood at her side, was also gearing up to dance, fully kitted out for the occasion.

“It has been a long time since I managed to make it here, two years maybe since I started dancing. I have done the tour really, having danced for a lot of different pow wows but I was missing this one so I came back to it,” said Malik.

The outfits at this year’s event ranged from ultra-traditional regalia that were replicas those worn pre-colonization to modern takes on Native traditions, employing fluorescent colours that could not have been replicated into a costume until the last few decades.



"I am wearing the garb of a warrior," said Magua Christian Beausejour, a Métis-Abenaki from Odenak. "This is all rudimentary stuff that is made from items in the

kids books – all with an engineering theme.

"We want to promote the engineering program to Aboriginal communities

"WE SPENT SEVEN HOURS TRAVELLING TO GET TO THIS POW WOW BUT WE CAME TO THIS ONE DESPITE THE DISTANCE BECAUSE IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST POW WOWS THAT I GOT TO KNOW."

wilderness and it is accurate to what was worn traditionally in pre-modern times."

Besides the dance arena and vendor stands, there were other organizations and schools on hand to spread their words about community and contributing to it in the future.

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal had a booth selling items that were made by many of the patrons who use their services in the hopes of raising dollars for the shelter.

"We are looking for donations and we are here to promote all of the different programs we offer. We have the outreach program, an addictions worker, a family worker, a holistic health worker and we also offer a lot of services to homeless women in transition," said Tealy Norman, an outreach worker from the shelter.

"We help many women every year. Last year we helped 517 and these were women from across the province and the country. It isn't about the numbers but the quality of the work we do," added administrative assistant Jennifer Shearer.

A few tents down, Bob Hopkins from Trent University was on hand to talk about Trent's Aboriginal programming.

"We had the first Indigenous Studies program back in 1970 and the first PhD program as well and we have a strong Mohawk focus in the programming.

"We have one Cree professor in the program but we also have women come down from Chisasibi to do teachings with our students and organize this huge feast," said Hopkins.

Queen's University also had a booth, which was geared to attract children with all sorts of blocks, digging tools and

and so we are trying to go to the pow wows to see if we can get kids interested in these programs at a young age," said Melanie, a Queen's engineering student.

Both of the individuals from Queen's were actually female students who had specifically come to try and engage the young girls at the event with the hopes of one day inspiring them to follow in their own footsteps.

Up from New York City was Chris, a volunteer from American Indian Community House, a social organization geared at giving Indigenous people a leg up in the Big Apple.

"NYC actually has the largest Native American population of any major city in the US with over 50,000 people.

"We do a lot of health work, which includes HIV/AIDS testing, pregnancy help and linking up individuals with services and jobs. It is a place for people to come when they need help or assistance with services," said Chris.

To find out more about the organization if you are headed to NYC, go to www.aich.org.

Hiding from the heat amidst her very busy vendor tent was Tammy Beauvais who seemed a little overwhelmed by the heat but incredibly enthusiastic despite this.

"Now that everybody is here, I think we are really doing okay. I have all sorts of new things here at the pow wow, like this beaded-looking fabric and other new textiles. I try to do a few new things every year, this looks like beaded fabric but it is just the print," said Beauvais.

New to her collection were a wide variety of leather goods as well as new printed fabrics. They can all be found at www.tammybeauvais.com/en/home.aspx

While there were all sorts of vendors, from those flogging natural cosmetics to baby clothes, to jewelry to baskets, among the most traditional of the shops was Randy Cliff of Randy's Leathers. Surrounded by stacks of deer and moose hides, the booth had furs hanging from every corner and available pole, including ermine, fox tails, coyote, sheep skin and beaver.

Cliff was only too happy to tell the Nation about the nature of his business.

"I get these hides from all over. Some people just drive by my place and throw dead animals at me. I am the local hide man and so if they run over something and they don't want to leave it out there they will drive by and throw it in my driveway," said Cliff.

Cliff said that he never travels for long periods since the carcasses tend to pile up.



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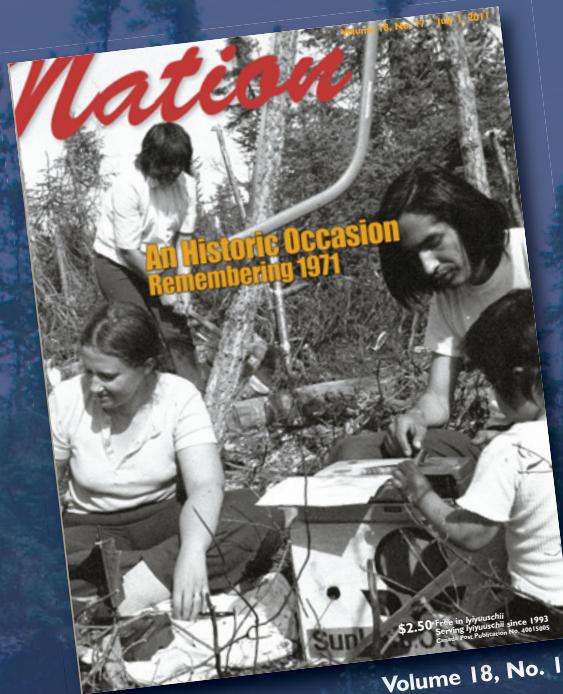
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The *Nation* is turning 20! To commemorate this historic occasion, the *Nation* is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its 20th Anniversary in November 2013. In the next 7 issues, the *Nation* flashback will feature some of the *Nation*'s stories, photos and award winning coverage throughout the years, which will be compiled in a 20th collector's edition issue.



Volume 18, No. 17

July 1, 2011

Remembering 1971

by Ignatius La Rusic

Every generation of Crees will have to retell and adapt the story of their past to meet the needs of their particular historical and cultural and social situation. That is what will keep them alive as Crees – both socially and culturally. They will need to shape the material into a narrative that will serve current political needs. It is in this context that we should understand the selection of persona and the narrative generated in the 2011 version of the Cree history-as-fable. Together We Stand Firm is the first episode of a planned four-part series titled The Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee. This initial episode presents a creation myth of how a new modern powerful nation was fashioned by a few mistapeos (Cree for Great Men). And very much in keeping with the recorded traditional Cree mythology, Episode One is a male tale in which women play no active part. Perhaps the activities of that other 51% of the Cree population will be introduced to the world in later episodes.

Demythologizing a myth entails first understanding how the myth was created. In my view the notion of a Cree Nation and the nature of the Cree leaders are the creation of mass media, a product of corporate imagination in the manner of a Broadway musical or a Hollywood Western – or, indeed, the CBC or CTV News. An epic Cree/Quebec court battle has become a tale of achievement by a few exemplary, larger-than-life men of astonishing rectitude. The Cree leaders presented in the movie are products of a literary mould that casts biographies to appeal to the giants of industry. The Eeyou Istchee narrative is clever in that it also can give a special spiritual thrill to Canadian New Agers who can find in it the validation of mythologized Cree culture and tradition, the romantic shadows of dreams like those that Don Juan spun out to Carlos Castaneda.

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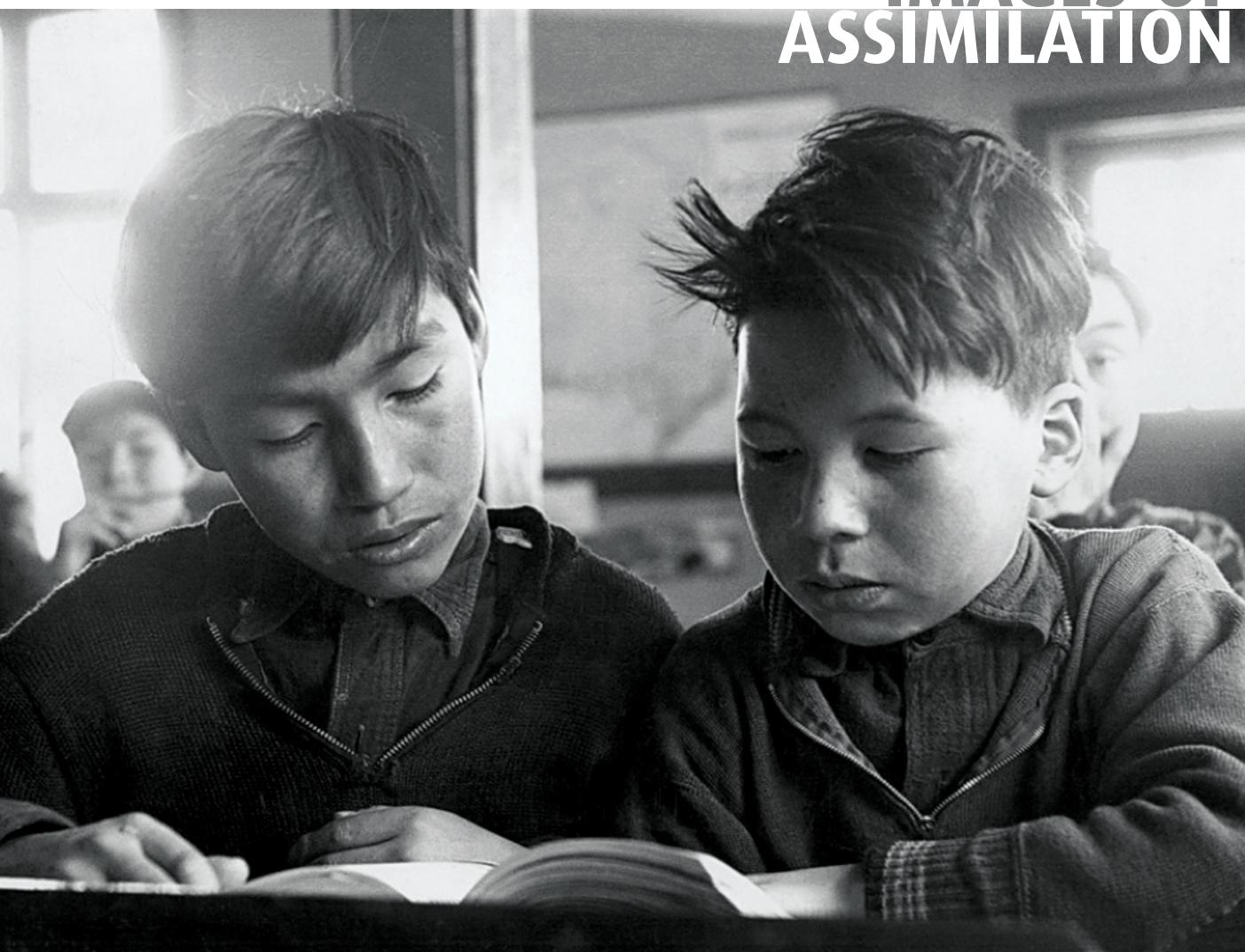
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COUNTDOWN TO 20TH... 7 ISSUES LEFT

IMAGES OF ASSIMILATION



An outdoor photo exhibit depicts images of Aboriginal children in residential schools

by Martin Siberok

Surrounded by the glass towers of downtown Montreal, a row of 13 metal display panels featuring a collection of black-and-white photographs populate a block on the tree-lined McGill College Avenue.

Every day, throngs of office workers, students and tourists stroll pass these images. Some briefly glance at the photographs, while

others slowly study each panel with intensity.

The McCord Museum, in association with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, has mounted this outdoor exhibition titled *Honouring Memory: Canada's Residential Schools*. Comprised of 24 large black-and-white archival photographs, the

exhibit focuses on the Aboriginal children who experienced the residential school system in Canada. Funded by the Canadian government and managed by various churches, residential schools were set up to assimilate Aboriginals into European-Canadian culture.

Between the 1870s and the 1990s, 150,000 Aboriginal children



from left to right: Pairing up to read at St. Philip's Indian Residential School in Fort George, Quebec, about 1940, Unknown photographer. Teepees outside the fence at Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School in Lebret, Saskatchewan, 1884 Oliver B. Buell. The school cricket team at the Battleford Indian Industrial School in Battleford, Saskatchewan, 1895, Ernest Maunder. Aboriginal boys dressed up in "Indian" costumes at St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, British Columbia, 1924, Alice Constance Dunn.

went through this system. While most survived the experience, very few came away unscathed having suffered psychological, physical and sometimes even sexual abuse.

In order to civilize these "savages" and wipe out any trace of their cultural identity, Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their homes and families and placed into

residential schools, far away from their communities.

While some Aboriginal families tried to stay close to their children, Canadian authorities worked hard to sever familial bonds. One photograph taken in 1884 reveals a cluster of teepees outside the gates of the Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School in Lebret, Saskatchewan,

where parents would have lived hoping to catch a glimpse of their "stolen" offspring.

A quote by Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, in 1883, captures the prevalent attitude toward Aboriginals at the time. "When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with his parents who are savages; he is surrounded by sav-



from left to right: "Richard" at St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, British Columbia, 1924, Alice Constance Dunn. Dormitory "C" at Elkhorn Indian Residential School in Elkhorn, Manitoba, about 1926, Alice Constance Dunn. Students at the Brandon Indian Residential School in Brandon, Manitoba, 1903, Wm. Notman & Son. Residential school students celebrating Palm Sunday in La Tuque, Quebec, 1964, Unknown photographer. Girl at St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, British Columbia, 1924, Alice Constance Dunn. Boy at Elkhorn Indian Residential School in Elkhorn in Manitoba, about 1926, Alice Constance Dunn. Girl in uniform at St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, British Columbia, about 1924, Alice Constance Dunn.

ages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write."

Many of these photographs are group shots revealing Aboriginal students, dressed in "Euro-Canadian" clothing and with short cropped hair, involved in a number of daily activities, like attending classes or going to church. These nameless children dressed in school uniforms engage in "white" games like cricket or football and play European musical instruments. All Aboriginal traditions, rituals, games and languages were banned in order to "Canadianize" them.

But not all the photos are group shots. Some are portraits thanks to the work of Alice Constance Dunn, a teacher at St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, British Columbia. Her portraiture gives her subjects names and personality.

One of Dunn's photographs is of 10 young Native boys dressed up as "Indians" wearing paper headdresses and buckskins and carrying bows-and-arrows. It's hard not to miss the irony of Indians playing Indians.

One of the photographs is of particular interest to the people in Eeyou Istchee. It is a shot taken in 1940 and features two Cree students intently studying a book they share. The two unidentified boys were students at St. Philip's Indian Residential School in Fort George. Perhaps someone in

Eeyou Istchee will recognize these young men.

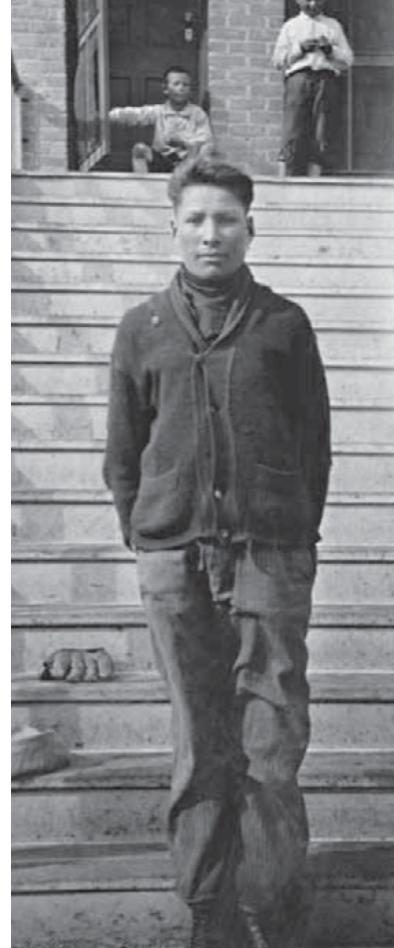
One of the panels features a map of Canada revealing where the various residential schools were located and which religious denominations they were affiliated with – Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Mennonite, Presbyterian, United or non-confessional.

What is striking is that most of the residential schools were located in the four Western provinces and the territories, but there were a significant number in Ontario and northern Quebec.

The map shows the schools that many of the James Bay Cree would have attended, including St. Philip's and St. Joseph's in Fort George, La Tuque School, Bishop Horden Hall in Moose Factory and St. Anne's in Fort Albany.

For more than 150 years, thousands of Aboriginal children – First Nations, Inuit and Métis – from across Canada were placed in residential schools. The objective was to strip them of their cultural identity, traditions and language. Fortunately, Canada's attempt to eradicate Aboriginal cultures failed, but the legacy of that effort still scars many individuals and communities.

Honouring Memory exhibit is located on McGill College Avenue (between De Maisonneuve Boulevard and President Kennedy Avenue) and runs until October 20. You can also view the exhibit online at the McCord Museum website.





Catch the radio show called "Iiyuu Companii Tipaachimuun" on JBCCS every 2 weeks Thursday mornings at 8:15-8:45am and replayed on Saturday mornings at 9am.

Iiyuu Companii Tipaachimuun

A presentation of The Board of Compensation and the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company



A TALK WITH

**Darlene Cheechoo,
Chairperson of the Board of Compensation and Creeco**

A Cree woman from Waskaganish, with an impressive resume of a Masters of Law, Degrees in Common Law, Civil Law, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Arts, she worked with various Cree entities. She was first elected to the CRA Board of Compensation in 2008, and in December 2012, she was elected chairperson of BOC Creeco.

It has been over 6 months since you became the Chairperson/President of the Board of Compensation and the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company? How is it going so far?

Watchiya. It has been going very well and has been very busy. I came into the position already very familiar with the company and subsidiary files as a previous board member and wanted to get more familiar with the details of each operation and the staffing. With the new President in place, CCDC is just going through transition to new management and they have since assumed full authority. As well, with Darren MacLeod taking over as Director of Gestion ADC, he is familiarizing himself with the operations and staff. CCDC is streamlining its operations and staff to create stronger efficiencies and Gestion ADC with its various partners is doing very well and has all its contracts and partnerships running smoothly.

You have also had some high profile staff changes as well.

Yes, the Director of Gestion ADC, Anthony MacLeod resigned in January and we have since hired Darren MacLeod as the new Director. He assumed his duties in mid-June. We also hired Robert Baribeau as the new President/CEO of CCDC as William MacLeod is officially retiring at the beginning of September.

So far, what has been the highlight?

To date, that all the companies are operating well. We owe that to our strong management team and staff and the leadership that has been displayed by the Board of Directors.

How is Air Creebec and Valpiro doing?

Air Creebec under the President, Matthew Happyjack is doing extremely well and has recently added two new planes that are already in full operation and operating at maximum capacity. Valpiro, which operates under Air Creebec, continues to do amazingly well and operates very smoothly under the watchful eye of our manager, Jasmin Frappier.

Very well, having secured its first contract in the Eleanore Project with Goldcorp.

WE ARE FOCUSING ON ENSURING OUR EXISTING GROUP OF COMPANIES IS OPERATING EFFICIENTLY AND THAT THEY ARE MAKING MONEY.

How is the Quality Inn and Suites doing?

They continues to do extremely well. It just won some new awards and is breaking records for best managed hotel and highest hotel occupancy rates in the region.

How is Eeyou Eenou Realty Properties doing?

Our real estate arm is operating smoothly with no immediate plans for any real estate purchases other than to ensure our existing inventory is operating and well maintained for our clients.

How is CREECO Dumas Mining Company doing?

Very well, having secured its first contract in the Eleanore Project with Goldcorp.

How are CCDC and Gestion ADC doing? Are there any major new initiatives in the works?

We are focusing on ensuring our existing group of companies is operating efficiently and that they are making money. At the same time, we continue to explore new opportunities as they are presented. Some of the initiatives that we have started are centered on returning to the community. We are developing a policy within all our companies to encourage volunteering and in-kind benefits to our communities. Sometimes the act of giving doesn't take a monetary form but a more personalized approach, which we hope will have a more direct impact.

We have also created a governance committee to guide us further. We think it will increase our transparency with our members and provide additional reassurance to our population. We will be updating on our progress throughout the year so make sure to tune in to our radio show and see our ad in the Nation.

With the upcoming Grand Council Annual General Assembly, do the Board of Compensation and CREECO provide an update during the agenda?

Yes, every year we prepare an annual report and we do present at the AGA to ensure the Cree Beneficiaries are fully up to date and that they get the information which is a requirement for us to provide as a board. We are looking forward to that opportunity again and it will be my first time presenting as the new Chairperson/President of the Board of Compensation and CREECO at the AGA.

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Indigenous representation

Reviews of films at the 23rd Montreal First Peoples' Festival

by Martin Siberok

Here are three films to watch out for at the First People's Film Festival, organized by Land InSights / Terres en vues. Films will be screened from July 30 to August 5, and to check out the detailed schedule, go to www.presenceautochtone.ca.

Xingu (Jungle)

Cao Hamburger (Brazil, 103 min)

Xingu is a Brazilian feature-length docu-drama based on the lives of the Villas-Bôas brothers – Claudio, Leonardo and Orlando – who were instrumental in creating the National Xingu Park, the first officially recognized Indian territory in Brazil in 1961. A tract of two million square kilometres, the park is a safe haven for Indigenous people, and a model for dozens reserves throughout South America.



In 1943, the Brazilian government launched the March West to explore central Brazil and take control of the region – which the Villas-Bôas siblings participated in. The objective was to build airstrips and set up outposts in this uncharted area, and eventually opening it to economic development and growth.

This film underlines how destructive white man's progress is for Indigenous people. The March West introduced life-threatening diseases to remote Aboriginal communities, transformed the natural habitat with highways and logging companies, and introduced private land ownership to communal lands.

This well-intentioned dramatization concludes with archival footage of the actual Villas-Bôas brothers, who realized that the only way to protect the remote tribes they encountered in the stunning Xingu region was to isolate them from the "civilized" world.

Nosilatiaj (Beauty)

Daniela Seggiano (Argentina, 81 min)

Daniela Seggiano's debut feature film is a well-crafted allegory on the plight of Native people in Argentina. Set in a small town in northern Argentina, *Nosilatiaj* focuses on Yola, a teenage Native girl who works as a domestic worker for a large white family. Though not mistreated, Yola is given little respect by the family, a situation she stoically deals with.

Yola is a Wichi, an Indigenous group that lives in the north-western Argentina near the borders of Bolivia and Chile. While the film is shot in Spanish, Yola narrates the childhood memories in Wichi Lhämtes.

She remembers her grandmother telling her, "Don't ever let anyone cut your hair off." The pride of Wichi women is their beautiful long hair, cut only when someone dies.

In preparation for her upcoming 15th birthday party celebration, Antonella, the boss's daughter, pays a visit to the hairdresser. Yola accompanies her, but the visit turns into a night-

mare for the Wichi teen when she is tricked into having her long braid cut off.

Seggiano provides a meditative view of how dominant cultures, in this case Argentineans, have harmed Indigenous people through cruelty and ignorance.

Winter in the Blood

Alex & Andrew Smith (USA, 98 min)

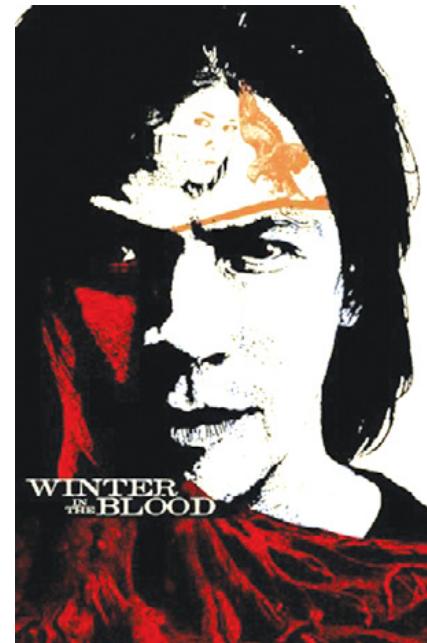
You know that the story will be a difficult one, when the film's protagonist states at the beginning, "I was caught in the in-between space. My body was vulnerable to the spirits. I was as distant from my self as a hawk from the moon. My throat ached of a terrible thirst."

Set on a Native American reservation in Montana, *Winter in the Blood* follows the intoxicated exploits of Virgil First Raise (Chaske Spencer of *Twilight* fame) as he searches for the wife who's left him and taken his beloved rifle to pawn for a few drinks.

An aimless and self-destructive character mired in the past, Virgil, a Blackfoot, lives his days in an alcoholic haze. He is plagued with the ghostly memories of his alcoholic father, who was found dead in a snowdrift, and the accidental death of his older brother when they were teenagers.

Based on the 1974 novel of the same name by Native American writer James Welch, the Smith brothers succeed in capturing Virgil's inner turmoil. The film makes good use of the glorious expanse of the Montana landscape, and has a top-notch soundtrack provided by the Austin-based Heartless Bastards.

Boasting an impressive array of Native American actors, the cast includes Gary Farmer (the mother's oafish boyfriend), Richard Ray Whitman (the alcoholic father) and Saginaw Grant (a wizened Elder).





A fairway hit BOC-CREECO's golf tournament was a swinging success

by Jeremy East



Ex-NHLer Stephane Richer hits the links with Darlene Cheechoo and Joshua Iserhoff

The 18-hole course at Val-d'Or's Club de Golf Belvédère came to life June 20 as the first-ever Board of Compensation and CREECO Golf Classic teed off to great success. Over 140 golfers from the Cree business world and beyond took to the course for golf, long-drive contests, putting competitions and more.

"Our tournament was at capacity and the golf course was packed with enthusiastic golfers who were ready to play and have fun," said Darlene Cheechoo, Chairperson and President of BOC & CREECO. "The weather cooperated and was not too hot, not too cold. And though it rained in the morning, it was nice for the rest of the day."

With the help of the tournament's sponsors and participants, organizers hoped to raise \$25,000 to be put towards youth initiatives in the Cree Nation.

"The accounting is still being finalized, but we're very close to our goal," said CREECO Marketing Director Christian Sinclair. "We will be working with the Regional Youth Council to determine where we will allocate the proceeds."

Among the participants golfing that day was special guest Stéphane Richer, a former Montreal Canadiens who played on the Stanley Cup-winning Habs squad in 1986. Richer moved around the course throughout the day to tee off with each team. However, the importance of Richer's presence went beyond swinging clubs and sharing laughs on the fairway.

"Mr. Richer was our keynote speaker and gave a very powerful speech regarding his personal experiences and the struggles he encountered in his life," said Cheechoo. "He admitted to our guests that he struggled

with suicidal thoughts and did attempt on one occasion. His message, though serious, was motivating in the sense that we can overcome and we should address such important issues. I think as a Nation and as individuals, we are struggling with the same issues as Mr Richer. He had the strength to share his story with us which should remove some of the stigma of sharing before it is too late."

As the day wound down, a banquet supper was held and winners for a prize draw and silent auction were announced. Casey Lee Mianscum nabbed the top prize of a trip for two to Disneyland, sponsored by Pash Travel.

"All in all it proved to be a major success, and more importantly we're looking forward to contribute to

important youth initiatives that will have a positive impact on the Cree Nation," said Sinclair, noting the high percentage of young golfers on the course and the participation of Youth Grand Chief Joshua Iserhoff.

The tournament's success in 2013 is something that BOC-CREECO hopes to improve on next year.

"Since the response was so great and since it is to raise money for worthy causes, we are planning to hold our tournament again," said Cheechoo. "In fact, we reserved the golf course for June 19, 2014 so keep your calendars free for that day."

The organizers wish to thank all the volunteers, participant, and sponsors for being a part of this year's Golf Classic, and look forward to the event's success in the coming years.



Stephane Richer shares a laugh with a young golfer



Board of Compensation & CREECO
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In the crease

Cree hopefuls attend hockey camp run by Winnipeg Jets goaltending coach

by Daniel Coyle



During the week of July 8, Waskaganish played host to the community's first hockey camp of the summer. Organized by Waskaganish Recreation Director Charles J. Hester and run by Barrett Leganchuk, scouting coordinator and assistant video coach for the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, the Pro-North Goaltending Camp brought together aspiring young goaltenders from across Eeyou Istchee for four days of intensive on-ice training in goaltending fundamentals.

Leading the young players through on-ice and dry land drills was former NHL goaltender and current Winnipeg Jets goaltending coach Wade Flaherty. A veteran of over 120 NHL games and over 500 AHL and IHL games, Flaherty's goal at camps like Pro-North Goaltending is to give the young players a taste of what a real pro hockey training camp is like, while instilling in his young charges

the importance of commitment and dedication to achieving objectives, both in hockey and in other endeavours off the ice.

"We have a total of 16 kids participating, from seven different Cree communities," said Leganchuk, who has run other hockey camps in Waskaganish in previous summers, most notably in 2009 when the on-ice activities were lead by current Toronto Maple Leafs goaltender James Reimer.

"There are quite a few of the top goalies from the Cree nation participating. They have been working hard and really want to learn."

For Flaherty, while he has participated in hockey schools attended by young Aboriginal players in his native British



Columbia, this has been his first experience running a hockey clinic in a northern community.

"I am very impressed with how things are run (in Waskaganish). This isn't the only camp that is run here. It's pretty impressive for such a small community," said Flaherty, who broke into the NHL coaching ranks in 2009 as develop-

"I AM VERY IMPRESSED WITH HOW THINGS ARE RUN (IN WASKAGANISH). THIS ISN'T THE ONLY CAMP THAT IS RUN HERE. IT'S PRETTY IMPRESSIVE FOR SUCH A SMALL COMMUNITY."

mental goaltending coach with the Chicago Blackhawks, where he worked closely with the Hawks' two Stanley Cup winning backstops – Antii Niemi and Corey Crawford.

"The key things we are focusing on are the fundamentals and advanced techniques," continued Flaherty.

Each goaltender was evaluated on the fly, on the first day, and then they were split into different groupings, primarily based on age. The younger group (age 6 to 13) was focused on basic fundamentals, while the older group (age 14+) was focused on technique drills – drills that are used by goaltenders in the National Hockey League.



"We've really tried to push these kids into more advanced drills," said Flaherty.

"We brought up some junior goalies who focused on dry land training. We also ran them through video sessions. Essentially, we show them what NHL goalies go through, as they prepare for what will happen the next day, in the next game."

On the final evening of the camp, the young players had the opportunity to attend a workshop presented by Mervin Cheechoo, father of former NHL star and Rocket Richard Trophy winner Jonathan Cheechoo.

The elder Cheechoo, along with former NHLer Rick Martin and other members of the Cheechoo family, runs the Hockey Camp of Hope, which took place in Waskaganish immediately following the Pro-North Goaltending camp. Cheechoo speaks to both young players and their parents about the importance of fierce but fair competition, and developing mental toughness in both hockey and life.

"Mervin's workshop is geared toward the athlete. I have heard the workshop before and it is very good. He really focuses on points that can help young athletes both on and off the ice. As a goalie, if you are not tough mentally, you will have a tough time," said Leganchuk.

"Fortunately, Mervin has been able to participate in our camp and we have been lucky to have him."

Cree Hockey News & Notes

- After a successful season with the Oklahoma City Barons of the AHL, during which he led the Barons to the AHL Western Conference Final, Moose Factory's Jonathan Cheechoo is heading to Europe after signing with Medvescak Zagreb of the KHL. Details of the contract were not available at press time.

- *Hit the Ice*, the popular APTN reality program highlighting the challenges of a professional calibre hockey camp, comes to a conclusion on July 19, with the camp's final game in Ottawa. The second season of *Hit the Ice* will hit the airwaves on APTN this winter.



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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

On top of the world

by Xavier Kataquapit

Everyone who has lost a father or mother understands what a terrible hole that makes in one's life. It seemed that those people who were so much a part of our earliest years would always be around. In fact, in talking with friends recently it dawned on us that most of the people we know are not even making it to their mid or late 70s. This seems more the case in First Nations where people are just not living as long as they should as a result of hard lives in remote communities. We are losing our Elders far too early because of diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Many First Nation people have had to survive hard times over the years when the only way they could make money was to trap or find jobs working for the government and in local stores. Most had no opportunities. In more recent years, with less time out on the land, my people have turned to modern fast foods and that is causing a lot of health problems. Alcohol and drugs have also contributed to poor health for many Native people and that continues to be a problem.

I have had all kinds of feelings in dealing with the passing of my father, Marius. I felt guilty for not having spent more time with him and my mom. I felt sad that he did not seem to really understand who I was and that he had to endure the residential school system and abuse as a child. I felt confused because he seemed to think that I would be better off never leaving my role as a tractor operator, carpenter or teacher assistant back home. He did not understand that writing could be a useful profession. He did not seem to appreciate the fact I was clean and sober. I also felt angry because I was upset that he had not made better choices in his lifestyle. Then through the healing of time I realized just how wonderful, strong, loving and dedicated my dad was to his wife and family.

Dad grew up when times were very hard for First Nation people during the 1940s, '50s and '60s. He was a man of the land by tradition and even more by necessity because he needed to trap, hunt and fish to keep himself and his family fed. He felt racism when he left Attawapiskat to work on the railroad but he endured and was also awakened to life in the modern world. He became a businessman and entrepreneur with all types of business start-ups, including contracting, restaurant

and food services, laundromat, transportation and the construction and set-up of a hotel. Through all of this and over the years he had his ups and downs and he struggled with all of the demons that most people deal with. This all took its toll. The strong and confident man I knew as a child became more and more weak as time marched on.

I wonder now how he managed to keep things together as well as he did. Much of this had to do with the good fortune in meeting my mum Susan. She was integral in his foundation as a good man. He picked himself up from so many falls in life and dusted himself off and kept on. And when he could not, mom was there to give him a boost and a place to rest his head and heart.

All through my day and every day I think of my dad. He visits me in many things I do during my work about the yard or cottage with all the lessons he taught me. He comes to me in my dreams to say Wachiya. Still, I find it strange that he has gone from this life and I have wondered until recently where he might be. I found out.

The last time I talked with my mom she told me that just before he passed, dad had confided in her about a place he came upon when he was a young man. In those days he had nowhere to go to feel free except for the land. On his own, many times he would head out to faraway places up and down the James Bay coast. He had all the skills he needed to survive alone and with nothing on the land for months and he did that often.

Dad told mom that on one trapping voyage out on the land he came across a most spectacular site that thrilled him. He stumbled onto a beautiful lake and at one end of it stood an amisk weesh-toon (a beaver house) as tall as a mansion. It was as high as a three-story house and stood majestically above the pine forest in the far northern wilderness. Dad had been so excited by his find that he went straight to the structure and climbed it until he reached the very top where he sat back and enjoyed the view of the land, the trees and the great James Bay. He was on top of the world that day. I like to think that he has once again climbed that amazing beaver house and is sitting there watching over all of us with a content and peaceful look on his face and a broad smile.

CLASSIFIEDS

I want to wish a happy 25th anniversary on July 12, 2013 to my husband, my friend, David Kawapit. We have gone through so much joy, sadness and losses in our lives together. We never gave up hope because we both have love and faith to our creator for giving us the strength to overcome the struggles and obstacles that came into our marriage. I am truly grateful that you are in my life, my love, my friend. Love always, your wife Rebecca

I would like to wish a happy 76th birthday to my lovely mother Mary Masty Sr. You gave me life, raised me and your love/care for me always there. I love you mom! And may god bless you. Love always your daughter Rebecca Masty-Kawapit

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(www.parenthelpline.ca)

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514-843-4333

(www.enfant-retourquebec.ca)

Drug Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626

(www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

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(Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688
(www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:

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Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

Concordia University, Montreal:

The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.

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